



# Recognition Fallacies: Misconceptions about Recognition and the Reality



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A photograph of a business meeting in a modern office setting. Two men in suits are shaking hands in front of a whiteboard displaying charts and graphs. A woman with long blonde hair is seated in the foreground, looking towards the men. Another man is partially visible on the left, also looking towards the center. The background features a brick wall and a wooden partition. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color.

# The Five Fallacies

Many misconceptions about recognition exist, hindering the frequency it is given. We've boiled it down to five fallacies and also present the reality!



# Just Fluffy Feel-Good

**Fallacy #1: Recognition is just a bunch of fluffy, feel-good sentiments, that have no real impact on propelling a team or organization forward.**

There is a common misconception that all recognition does is make people feel good. It is not seen as a way to boost performance and lead organizations to greater success. By definition, recognition is an after-the-fact display of appreciation. It's a powerful and effective way of affirming others.

**Reality: Recognition is a game-changing accelerator that amplifies all relationships and has a profound impact on moving teams/organizations forward.**

It's vital to any thriving relationship. If you think about all the healthy relationships in your life, can you think of a single one that doesn't involve expression of gratitude? All the people you work with – peers, leaders, clients, vendors, partners – are real human beings with real emotions. Humans crave feedback, and the most positive form of feedback you can give is recognition.



# Expensive Gifts Only



**Fallacy #2: Recognition needs to be expensive, an elaborate celebration, or tied to a physical gift of some sort.**

The word recognition is often associated with tangible trophies, awards, or gifts. Limiting recognition to the physical puts up a barrier to increasing the frequency it is given. Especially when an organization doesn't have a big budget. The important part is confirming actions and behaviors that reflect your company's values.

**Reality: Recognition is about gratitude. The power of a personal note, eCard, or shoutout is just as (if not more) impactful than a physical award.**

Some of the best praise can be given at little to no cost. People want to know their work matters, so make a habit of reminding them often. Frequent recognition signals belonging and communicates that they are headed in the right direction. Connecting positive behaviors and actions to organizational values is also a great way to instill them in your culture.



# All About Winning



**Fallacy #3: Recognition is reserved for the special accomplishments, big achievements, and major victories.**

It makes sense to recognize the big wins. They are what we strive for and look forward to celebrating. But they may only happen for a select few employees. Focusing only on outcomes makes it easy to forget about small wins and daily efforts. And when the little moments are ignored, recognition becomes a rare occasion.

**Reality: Recognition should not be tied to winning or outcomes. It should be used frequently to affirm the efforts, decisions, and learnings that occur daily.**

Employees work hard, and work can be difficult. Solely looking at results only adds more stress to their lives. Acknowledge when team members are giving their all day in and day out. After all, it's the day-to-day efforts and decisions that lead to wins on the scoreboard. Recognizing daily efforts doesn't take away from the big wins – It makes them even greater.

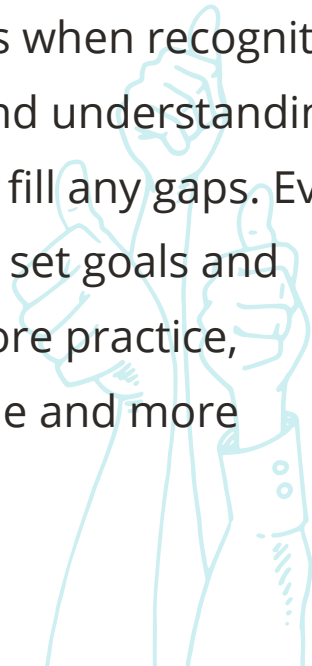
# It'll Come Naturally

**Fallacy #4: The act of providing recognition is natural for people, especially leaders, and will just organically happen.**

Another misconception is that recognition comes naturally. With this belief, leaders may wait to give recognition until it seems obvious. Even when it is obvious, expressing emotions isn't easy and can seem daunting. Giving effective recognition requires a lot of practice, habit-forming, and accountability.

**Reality: Leaders, without proper training/tools, clear goals, and an accountability shift will tend to put recognition on the sideline.**

It's not necessarily the fault of leaders when recognition lacks. The right resources, training, and understanding can help leaders prioritize praise and fill any gaps. Even the most experienced leaders should set goals and expectations for themselves. With more practice, leaders will become more comfortable and more confident giving recognition.





# Top-Down Driven



**Fallacy #5: The act of giving recognition and providing feedback is only a top-down driven activity.**

People often think of recognition as coming from a leader. Some believe giving out praise is solely the role of managers. The truth is that any team member can – and should – recognize others. In fact, front-line team members typically have the most visibility into daily moments that deserve to be highlighted.

**Reality: *Every* team member plays an integral role in developing a high-performing team culture where feedback and gratitude are abundant.**

Positive feedback can be just as impactful moving from the bottom up as the top down. Leaders need to feel appreciated like any other employee. Peer-to-peer recognition is also very empowering. Sometimes praise from a peer can be even more meaningful than praise from a manager. No titles or seniority are needed to spark change and inspire others!



# What's Next?

We help organizations create a program with a holistic approach to recognition. We've got everything from formal service awards to a digital platform for daily engagement.

We love enabling organizations to shine a light on all the moments that matter. Partner with us!



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